



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

9 October 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, Guided Missile Intelligence Committee

SUBJECT: Soviet ICBM Development Program

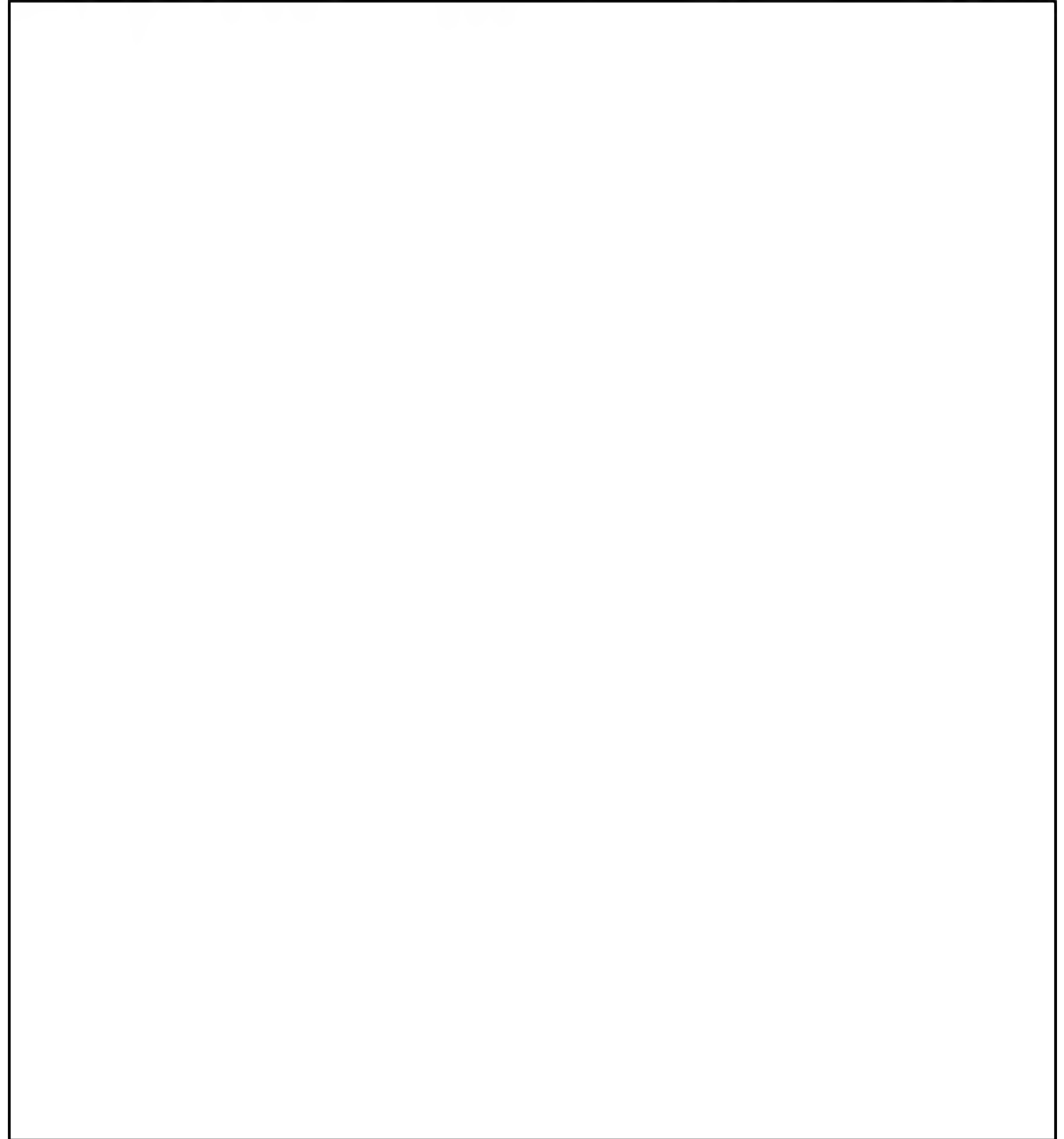
1. We have estimated, for a variety of cogent reasons, that the Soviets have assigned a very high priority to their ICBM development program, and that they have already decided to acquire a sizeable operational capability with ICBMs at the earliest practicable date. In the light of much evidence of high Soviet capabilities in ballistic missiles, of the establishment of a new test range for ICBM and related purposes, and of the early achievement of initial ICBM and earth satellite vehicle launchings, we have also estimated that the USSR will probably achieve an initial ICBM operational capability some time during calendar 1959. We have not ruled out the possibility that the Soviets may establish in the latter part of 1958 a limited operational capability with comparatively unproven ICBMs.

2. These estimates of the probable and possible date of initial Soviet operational capability with ICBMs were predicated upon the fairly frequent test firing of ICBMs over a period of months. But following the first few ICBMs and earth satellite launchings, the test-firing program apparently proceeded at a slower pace than we had anticipated. More recently, to the best of our knowledge there has been no successful firing of an ICBM test vehicle since late May 1958, a period of more than five months.

3. In view of the importance of this question to US national security, and of the imminence of a new national estimate on Soviet capabilities and intentions in the military and other fields (NIE 11-4-58),

it would be appropriate for GMIC at an early date to reexamine the Soviet ICBM development program and to reaffirm or recommend modification of our existing estimate. In this re-examination, the following questions should be considered:

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ALLEN W. DULLES
Director

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